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COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION
First session
18-29 November 2002
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

Note by the secretariat

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I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. The provisional agenda presented for adoption is as follows:

1. Election of officers other than the Chairperson of the Committee.

2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

3. Review of the implementation of the Convention, pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2(a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention:

(a) Review of reports on implementation of affected country Parties of all regions, including on the participatory process, and on experience gained and results achieved in the preparation and implementation of action programmes;

(b) Review of reports by developed country Parties on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes of affected country Parties of all regions, including information on financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention;

(c) Review of information provided by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention;

(d) Review of available information regarding the financing of Convention implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions, including information on the activities of the Global Environment Facility concerning desertification that relate to its four focal areas, as specified in article 20, paragraph 2(b) of the Convention.

4. Review of activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies.

5. Programme of work for the second session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.

6. Adoption of the report of the Committee to the Conference of the Parties, including conclusions and recommendations.

II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Introduction

2. By its decision 1/COP.5, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) decided to establish the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) as a subsidiary body of the COP to assist it in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention. Pursuant to provisions contained in decision 2/COP.5, the first session of the CRIC will be held from 18 to 29 November 2002.

Logistic arrangements

3. A few weeks before the opening of the session, the secretariat will distribute an information note detailing registration and security procedures, as well as other logistic arrangements for the session.

Participants

4. In accordance with article 36, paragraph 2, of the UNCCD, for each State or regional economic integration organization which ratifies, accepts or approves the Convention or accedes thereto after the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, the Convention enters into force on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit with the Depositary of the relevant instrument. Consequently, the Parties as of the opening of the first session of the CRIC on 18 November 2002 will be the States and regional economic integration organizations to have deposited their instruments by 21 August 2002. Those to deposit their instruments after 21 August 2002 and by 1 September 2002 will become Parties during the session. Those to do so after 1 September 2002 will not become Parties until after the closure of the session but can participate in the session as observers. The intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations accredited at the fifth session of the COP are listed in ICCD/COP(5)/9 and Add.1. Relevant information on the status of ratifications has been made available on the secretariat's Internet web site at the following address: http://www.unccd.int.

5. According to decision 1/COP.5, the CRIC shall be composed of all Parties to the Convention. Any other body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, which wishes to be represented at a session of the Committee as an observer may be admitted unless one third of the Parties present at the session object. The procedure for admission of observers is detailed in rule 7 of the Rules of procedure of the COP (decision 1/COP.1 as contained in ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1).

6. By the same decision, the review process shall examine, *inter alia*, information and advice from the Global Mechanism (GM) and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), consistent with their respective mandates. The CST, including through the use of its group of experts, and the GM are

also invited to provide to the CRIC advice and information on the basis of the reports by the secretariat.

Bureau

7. In accordance with the provisions contained in decision 1/COP.5, the Committee shall elect its own four Vice-Chairpersons, of whom one shall act as Rapporteur. Together with the Chairperson elected by the COP at its fifth session in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure, they shall constitute the Bureau of the Committee.

Agenda

8. The Convention provides, in article 22, paragraph 2(a), that the COP shall regularly review the implementation of the Convention and the functioning of its institutional arrangements. The COP, by decision 1/COP.5, established the CRIC to assist the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention, in the light of experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, and to facilitate the exchange of information on measures adopted by the Parties, pursuant to article 26 of the Convention, in order to draw conclusions and to propose to the COP concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention.

9. By the same decision, the COP decided that, at sessions held between ordinary sessions of the COP, the CRIC shall:

(i) Use as the basis of the review of implementation by the COP, the reports by Parties, together with advice and information provided by the Committee on Science and Technology and the Global Mechanism consistent with their respective mandates, and such other reports as the COP may call for;

(ii) Identify and analyse the efficiency and effectiveness of measures taken by the Parties and stakeholders with a view to focusing on activities that meet the needs of people living in affected areas and enhancing measures to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought;

(iii) Identify and synthesize best practices, experiences and lessons learned;

(iv) Identify necessary adjustments to the elaboration process and the implementation of action programmes;

(v) Identify emerging and challenging issues deriving from implementation;

(vi) Consider information on the mobilization and use of financial resources and other support with a view to enhancing their effectiveness and efficiency towards the achievements of the objectives of the Convention, including information from the GM;

(vii) Identify ways and means of improving procedures for communication of information, as well as for the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the COP;

(viii) Identify ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer, in particular from the developed countries to the developing countries, for combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought;

(ix) Identify ways and means of promoting experience sharing and information exchange among Parties and all other interested institutions and organizations;

(x) Draw conclusions and propose concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention;

(xi) Submit a comprehensive report to the COP in the light of its programme of work, including conclusions and recommendations.

These, in addition to issues arising from other decisions of the COP, in particular decision 11/COP.1, have been taken into account in the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat in agreement with the Chairperson of the Committee.

10. At the beginning of the session, the Committee shall adopt its agenda and organization of work for the session.

Documentation

11. A list of documents for the session and other relevant documents is provided in annex I. In addition to normal distribution, official documents for the session as well as full reports from country Parties and observers have been made available on the secretariat's Internet web site at the following address: http://www.unccd.int.

1. Election of officers other than the Chairperson of the Committee

12. Pursuant to article 4 of the terms of reference of the CRIC, as contained in decision 1/COP.5, four Vice-Chairpersons, who, with the Chairperson, are to serve as the Bureau of the Committee, shall be elected with due regard to the need to ensure equitable geographical distribution and adequate representation of affected country Parties, particularly those in Africa, while not neglecting affected country Parties in other regions. The Chairperson will call for the election of these officers at the opening meeting.

2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

13. The CRIC will have before it the provisional agenda (see section I, above) to consider for adoption. A tentative schedule of work for the session, on which the subsections below elaborate, is contained in annex II.

Purpose of the session

14. By its decision 1/COP.5, the COP adopted the terms of reference of the CRIC, as contained in an annex to that decision. They stipulate, *inter alia*, that the review will be an experience-sharing and lessons-learning exercise which will identify successes, obstacles and difficulties with a view to improving the implementation of the Convention, and that it shall be conducted thematically with due regard to geographic regions and subregions.

15. The key thematic topics for the review, as laid down in decision 1/COP.5, shall be the following:

- participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations
- legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements
- resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusions of partnership agreements
- linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies
- measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought
- drought and desertification monitoring and assessment
- access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how.

The proposed organization of work of the session is designed to facilitate thematic as well as geographic review, as required by decision 1/COP.5.

Opening meeting

16. With regard to the structure of the opening meeting, the CRIC may wish to consider the following scenario. The Chairman of the CRIC would open the session and then call for the election of Vice-Chairpersons and the adoption of the agenda. The CRIC would then hear the statement by the Executive Secretary who would present an overview of issues before the CRIC and introduce the documents prepared by the secretariat. Statements would then be made by the Parties and observers to the Convention.

Thematic segment

17. In accordance with the provisions contained in decision 1/COP.5, it is proposed that the first session of the CRIC be divided into two segments. During the first segment, from 18 to 22 November, the CRIC would conduct a thematic review with due regard to geographic regions and subregions. Three groups of thematic topics would be introduced by the secretariat, followed by short presentations of case studies from all regions. Comments by the representatives of the CST (on themes 5, 6 and 7) and the GM (on theme 3) are expected to bring added value to this exercise. The information contained in the reports from developed country Parties, as well as relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, would also be considered during the thematic segment. A concluding discussion would complete each of the thematic sessions.

Wrap-up sessions

18. In the second segment, from 25 to 26 November, there would be a wrap-up session on each regional implementation annex, in accordance with the mandate and functions of the CRIC as defined in paragraph 1(a)(iii) to (x) of the terms of reference. These would include comments by developed country Parties and concerned international and non-governmental organizations on the support they are providing to affected country Parties of these regions in the implementation of the Convention.

Elaboration of the comprehensive report and concluding meeting

19. The proposed tentative schedule allows for the elaboration of the comprehensive report of the CRIC, including conclusions and recommendations, on 27 and 28 November. During the concluding meeting on 29 November 2002, the final report as well as the programme of work for the second session of the CRIC will be submitted for adoption.

Times of meetings

20. The tentative schedule aims to make the best use of the facilities available during normal working hours. No scheduling or budgetary provision has been made for evening or weekend sessions. Consistent with local working hours and to avoid incurring overtime expenses, the normal working hours of the first session of the CRIC will be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. No provision has been made for more than one meeting with interpretation services to be held at any one time.

3. Review of the implementation of the Convention, pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2(a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention

21. Pursuant to article 22, paragraphs 2(a) and 2(b), and article 26 of the Convention, the COP is to review the implementation of the UNCCD and its institutional arrangements.

22. By its decision 1/COP.5, the COP decided to establish a committee for the review of the implementation of the Convention as a subsidiary body of the COP to assist it in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention and to adopt the terms of reference of the CRIC as contained in the annex to that decision.

23. By the same decision, the COP decided that the first session of the CRIC shall review updates to reports already available and/or new reports, to be submitted no later than 30 April 2002, and that the review shall focus on specific thematic issues identified by Parties.

24. Decision 1/COP.5 also recalls that the review process shall examine, *inter alia*, reports submitted by the Parties and information and advice from the GM and the CST, as well as reports by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and such other reports as the COP may call for.

(a) Review of reports on implementation of the Convention by affected country Parties of all regions, including on the participatory process, and on experience gained and results achieved in the preparation and implementation of action programmes

25. By decision 1/COP.5, the first session of the CRIC is charged with the task of reviewing updates to reports already available and/or new reports from all regions. ICCD/CRIC(1)/2 to 5 introduce the documents prepared by the secretariat for each regional implementation annex.

26. In accordance with decision 1/COP.5, the secretariat has prepared the synthesis and preliminary analysis of reports submitted by affected country Parties, setting out the trends emerging in implementation of the Convention. The synthesis and preliminary analysis of national reports from affected African, Asian, Latin American and the Caribbean and Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other affected country Parties are contained in ICCD/CRIC(1)/2/Add.1 to 5/Add.1, respectively.

27. In accordance with decision 11/COP.1, the secretariat has also compiled the summaries of such reports. The summaries of reports from affected African country Parties are contained in ICCD/CRIC(1)/2/Add.2, the summaries of reports from affected Asian country Parties in ICCD/CRIC(1)/3/Add.2, the summaries of reports from affected Latin American and the Caribbean country Parties in ICCD/CRIC(1)/4/Add.2, and the summaries of reports from Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other affected country Parties in ICCD/CRIC(1)/5/Add.2.

28. Decision 1/COP.5 also requests the secretariat to take advantage of its ongoing activities at the regional and/or subregional levels to disseminate information stemming from its preliminary analysis in order to obtain feedback with a view to enriching the Committee's work base. The regional and subregional feedback, obtained through meetings organized for all regions, is presented in ICCD/CRIC(1)/2/Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/3/Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/4/Add.3 and ICCD/CRIC(1)/5/Add.3, for African, Asian, Latin

American and the Caribbean, and Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other country Parties regions, respectively.

(b) Review of reports by developed country Parties on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes of affected country Parties of all regions, including information on financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention

29. The synthesis and preliminary analysis of reports from developed country Parties are contained in ICCD/CRIC(1)/6/Add.1, while the compilation of summaries of these reports is provided in ICCD/CRIC(1)/6/Add.2.

(c) Review of information provided by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention

30. The secretariat has prepared a synthesis of the information provided by United Nations organizations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes; this synthesis is contained in ICCD/CRIC(1)/7.

(d) Review of available information regarding the financing of Convention implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions, including information on the activities of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) concerning desertification that relate to its four focal areas, as specified in article 20, paragraph 2(b) of the Convention

31. By decision 1/COP.5, one of the tasks of the first session of the CRIC is to consider information on the mobilization and use of financial resources and other support with a view to enhancing their efficiency and their effectiveness towards the achievement of the objectives of the Convention. The information regarding the financing of Convention implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions, including the GEF, is contained in ICCD/CRIC(1)/8, as well as ICCD/CRIC(1)/7. Additional information regarding the financing of Convention implementation is contained in the documents mentioned in paragraphs 26 to 30.

4. Review of activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies

32. According to decision 1/COP.5, the first session of the CRIC should also consider linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, national development strategies. Document ICCD/CRIC(1)/9 gives a review of activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies.

5. Programme of work for the second session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

33. By its decision 1/COP.5, the COP decided to charge the second session of the CRIC, which will take place during the sixth session of the COP, with the following tasks:

(i) Consideration of the comprehensive report of the first session of the CRIC;

(ii) Review of the policies, operational modalities and activities of the Global Mechanism;

(iii) Review of the report prepared by the secretariat on the execution of its functions;

(iv) Consideration of the report on the collaboration with the GEF;

with a view to elaborating draft decisions, where necessary, for consideration and, as appropriate, adoption by the COP.

6. Adoption of the comprehensive report of the Committee to the COP, including conclusions and recommendations

34. According to decision 1/COP.5, at sessions held between ordinary sessions of the COP, the CRIC is, *inter alia*, to draw conclusions and propose to the COP concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention, through a comprehensive report to the COP in the light of its programme of work.

35. The report of the Committee shall be submitted to the COP for its consideration and any decision the Conference may wish to take on the implementation of the Convention.

Annex I

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Documents available at the first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention:

Document symbol	Title or description
ICCD/CRIC(1)/1	Adoption of the agenda and organization of work - Provisional agenda and annotations
ICCD/CRIC(1)/2	Review of reports on implementation of affected African country Parties, including on the participatory process, and on experience gained and results achieved in the preparation and implementation of action programmes
ICCD/CRIC(1)/2/Add.1(A)	Synthesis and preliminary analysis of information contained in reports submitted by affected African country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(1)/2/Add.1(B)	Progress made in the formulation and implementation of subregional and regional action programmes in Africa
ICCD/CRIC(1)/2/Add.2	Compilation of summaries of reports submitted by affected African country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(1)/2/Add.3	Inputs from the regional meeting of affected African country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(1)/3	Review of reports on implementation of affected Asian country Parties, including on the participatory process, and on experience gained and results achieved in the preparation and implementation of action programmes
ICCD/CRIC(1)/3/Add.1	Synthesis and preliminary analysis of information contained in reports submitted by affected Asian country Parties, and progress made in the formulation and implementation of subregional and regional action programmes in Asia
ICCD/CRIC(1)/3/Add.2	Compilation of summaries of reports submitted by affected Asian country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(1)/3/Add.3	Inputs from the regional meeting of affected Asian country Parties

Document symbol	Title or description
ICCD/CRIC(1)/4	Review of reports on implementation of affected Latin American and the Caribbean country Parties, including on the participatory process, and on experience gained and results achieved in the preparation and implementation of action programmes
ICCD/CRIC(1)/4/Add.1	Synthesis and preliminary analysis of information contained in reports submitted by affected Latin American and the Caribbean country Parties, and progress made in the formulation and implementation of subregional and regional action programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean
ICCD/CRIC(1)/4/Add.2	Compilation of summaries of reports submitted by affected Latin American and the Caribbean country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(1)/4/Add.3	Inputs from the regional meeting of Latin American and the Caribbean country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(1)/5	Review of reports on implementation of Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other affected country Parties, including on the participatory process, and on experience gained and results achieved in the preparation and implementation of action programmes
ICCD/CRIC(1)/5/Add.1	Synthesis and preliminary analysis of information contained in reports submitted by Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other affected country Parties, and progress made in the formulation and implementation of subregional and regional action programmes in Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern Europe and other affected country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(1)/5/Add.2	Compilation of summaries of reports submitted by Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other affected country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(1)/5/Add.3	Inputs from the meeting of Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other affected country Parties

Document symbol	Title or description
ICCD/CRIC(1)/6	Review of reports by developed country Parties on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes of affected country Parties of all regions, including information on financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention
ICCD/CRIC(1)/6/Add.1	Synthesis and preliminary analysis of information contained in reports submitted by developed country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(1)/6/Add.2	Compilation of summaries of reports submitted by developed country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(1)/7	Review of information provided by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention
ICCD/CRIC(1)/8	Review of available information regarding the financing of the implementation of the Convention by multilateral agencies and institutions, including information on the activities of the Global Environment Facility concerning desertification that relate to its four focal areas, as specified in article 20, paragraph 2(b) of the Convention
ICCD/CRIC(1)/9	Review of activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies
ICCD/CRIC(1)/INF.1	Arrangements for the first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention - Preliminary information for participants
ICCD/CRIC(1)/INF.2	Status of ratification of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
ICCD/CRIC(1)/INF.3	List of participants to the first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

Document symbol	Title or description
ICCD/CRIC(1)/INF.4	Second reporting process on UNCCD implementation - Explanatory Note and Help Guide (Affected country Parties of the Regional Implementation Annex for Africa)
ICCD/CRIC(1)/INF.5	Second reporting process on UNCCD implementation - Explanatory Note and Help Guide (Affected country Parties of the Regional Implementation Annex for Asia)
ICCD/CRIC(1)/INF.6	Second reporting process on UNCCD implementation - Explanatory Note and Help Guide (Affected country Parties of the Regional Implementation Annex for Latin America and the Caribbean)
ICCD/CRIC(1)/INF.7	Second reporting process on UNCCD implementation - Explanatory Note and Help Guide (Affected country Parties of regions other than Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean)
ICCD/CRIC(1)/INF.8	Second reporting process on UNCCD implementation - Explanatory Note (Developed country Parties)

Other documents:

Fifth session of the Conference of the Parties

ICCD/COP(5)/9	Accreditation of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, admission of observers
ICCD/COP(5)/11	Report of the Conference of the Parties at its fifth session: Proceedings
ICCD/COP(5)/11/Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties at its fifth session: Action taken

Previous sessions of the Conference of the Parties

ICCD/COP(4)/11/Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties at its fourth session: Action taken
ICCD/COP(4)/AHWG/6	Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group to the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties
ICCD/COP(3)/20/Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties at its third session: Action taken

Document symbol	Title or description
ICCD/COP(2)/14/Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties at its second session: Action taken
ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties at its first session: Action taken

Annex II

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF WORK

MONDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2002	
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	***3 p.m. - 6 p.m.***
Opening of the session by the Chairperson of the CRIC • Election of officers other than the Chairperson of the Committee • Adoption of the agenda and organization of work *(ICCD/CRIC(1)/1)* *Statement by the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD* *Other statements by Parties and observers*	• Review of the implementation of the Convention, pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2(a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention - Review of reports on implementation of affected country Parties of all regions, including on the participatory process, and on experience gained and results achieved in the preparation and implementation of action programmes - Review of reports by developed country Parties on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes of affected country Parties of all regions, including information on financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention - Review of information provided by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention *Thematic topic 1: Participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations*

MONDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2002, cont'd	
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	***3 p.m. - 6 p.m.***
	Thematic topic 2: Legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements *Thematic topic 4: Linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies* *African region (ICCD/CRIC(1)/2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/2/Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)* • Review of activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies *(ICCD/CRIC(1)/9)*

TUESDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2002	
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	***3 p.m. - 6 p.m.***
Thematic topics 1, 2 and 4 (continued) *Asian region (ICCD/CRIC(1)/3, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)* *Latin American and the Caribbean region (ICCD/CRIC(1)/4, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)* • Review of activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies *(ICCD/CRIC(1)/9)*	*Thematic topics 1, 2 and 4 (continued)* *Northern Mediterranean and Central and Eastern European regions and other affected country Parties (ICCD/CRIC(1)/5, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)* • Review of activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies *(ICCD/CRIC(1)/9)*

WEDNESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2002	
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	**3 p.m. - 6 p.m.**
• Review of the implementation of the Convention, pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2(a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention *(continued)* *Thematic topic 5: Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land* *Thematic topic 6: Drought and desertification monitoring and assessment; early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought* *Thematic topic 7: Access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how* *Asian region (ICCD/CRIC(1)/3, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)*	*Thematic topics 5, 6 and 7 (continued)* *Latin American and the Caribbean region (ICCD/CRIC(1)/4, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)* *Northern Mediterranean and Central and Eastern European regions and other affected country Parties (ICCD/CRIC(1)/5, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)*

THURSDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2002	
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	**3 p.m. - 6 p.m.**
Thematic topics 5, 6 and 7 (continued) *African region (ICCD/CRIC(1)/2, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)*	• Review of the implementation of the Convention, pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2(a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention *(continued)* *Thematic topic 3: Resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusions of partnership agreements* *Latin American and the Caribbean region (ICCD/CRIC(1)/4, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)*

FRIDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2002	
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	**3 p.m. - 6 p.m.**
Thematic topic 3 (continued) *Northern Mediterranean and Central and Eastern European regions and other affected country Parties (ICCD/CRIC(1)/5, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)* *African region (ICCD/CRIC(1)/2, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)*	*Thematic topic 3 (continued)* *Asian region (ICCD/CRIC(1)/3, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)* - Review of available information regarding the financing of Convention implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions, including information on those activities of the Global Environment Facility concerning desertification that relate to its four focal areas, as specified in article 20, paragraph 2(b) of the Convention *(ICCD/CRIC(1)/8)*

MONDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2002	
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	**3 p.m. - 6 p.m.**
• Review of the implementation of the Convention, pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2(a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention *(continued)* *Wrap-up session on Africa (ICCD/CRIC(1)/2, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)*	• Review of the implementation of the Convention, pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2(a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention *(continued)* *Wrap-up session on Asia (ICCD/CRIC(1)/3, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)*

TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2002	
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	**3 p.m. - 6 p.m.**
• Review of the implementation of the Convention, pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2(a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention *(continued)* *Wrap-up session on Latin America and the Caribbean (ICCD/CRIC(1)/4, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)*	• Review of the implementation of the Convention, pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2(a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention *(continued)* *Wrap-up session on the Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern Europe and other affected country Parties (ICCD/CRIC(1)/5, Add.1 to Add.3, ICCD/CRIC(1)/6, Add.1 and Add.2, ICCD/CRIC(1)/7)*

WEDNESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2002	
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	***3 p.m. - 6 p.m.***
Elaboration of the report of the Committee to the Conference of the Parties, including conclusions and recommendations	*Elaboration of the report of the Committee to the Conference of the Parties, including conclusions and recommendations*

THURSDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2002	
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	***3 p.m. - 6 p.m.***
Elaboration of the report of the Committee to the Conference of the Parties, including conclusions and recommendations	*Elaboration of the report of the Committee to the Conference of the Parties, including conclusions and recommendations*

FRIDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2002	
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	***3 p.m. - 6 p.m.***
• Programme of work for the second session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention	• Adoption of the report of the Committee to the Conference of the Parties, including conclusions and recommendations *Closing of the session*

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UNITED NATIONS

Convention to Combat Desertification

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COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION
First session
18-29 November 2002
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22, PARAGRAPH 2(A) AND (B), AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE CONVENTION

REVIEW OF REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION BY AFFECTED AFRICAN COUNTRY PARTIES, INCLUDING ON THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS, AND ON EXPERIENCE GAINED AND RESULTS ACHIEVED IN THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES

Note by the secretariat

1. Pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2(a) and (b), and article 26 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Conference of the Parties (COP) shall review the implementation of the Convention and its institutional arrangements. By its decision 1/COP.5, the COP decided to establish a committee for the review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC) as a subsidiary body of the COP to assist it in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention, and to adopt the terms of reference of the CRIC as contained in the annex to that decision. The COP also decided that the first session of the CRIC should review updates to reports already available and/or new reports and that the review should focus on specific thematic topics.

2. In accordance with the same decision, the secretariat has prepared a synthesis and preliminary analysis of these reports, setting out the trends emerging in the implementation of the Convention. A synthesis and preliminary analysis of reports submitted by affected African country Parties are contained in ICCD/CRIC(1)/2/Add.1.

3. In accordance with decision 11/COP.1, the secretariat has compiled summaries of the reports. The summaries of reports from affected African country Parties are contained in ICCD/CRIC(1)/2/Add.2.

4. Decision 1/COP.5 also requests the secretariat to take advantage of its ongoing activities at the regional and/or subregional levels to disseminate information stemming from its preliminary analysis and seek to obtain feedback with a view to enriching the Committee's work base. The regional and subregional feedback obtained at a meeting organized for the African region from 15 to 19 July 2002 in Windhoek, Namibia, is presented in ICCD/CRIC(1)/2/Add.3.

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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22, PARAGRAPHS 2 (a) AND 2 (b), AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE CONVENTION

REVIEW OF REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF AFFECTED AFRICAN COUNTRY PARTIES, INCLUDING ON THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS, AND ON EXPERIENCE GAINED AND RESULTS ACHIEVED IN THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES

SYNTHESIS AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN REPORTS SUBMITTED BY AFFECTED AFRICAN COUNTRY PARTIES

Note by the secretariat

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Introduction

1. Under article 26 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, each party must communicate to the Conference of the Parties reports on the measures which it has taken for the implementation of the Convention. In that context, affected country parties provide a description of the strategies they have drawn up, as well as a detailed description of action programmes, together with any relevant information concerning their implementation.

2. At its first session, in decision 11/COP.1, the Conference of the Parties set out guidelines and procedures to organize and streamline the communication of information in pursuance of article 22, paragraphs (a) and (b), of the Convention, in order to facilitate its review.

3. The institutional mechanism set up to assist in the review of the implementation of the Convention is described in decision 1/COP.5, concerning the establishment of a committee for the review of the implementation of the Convention as well as its mandate and functions.

4. In December 2001 the secretariat of the Convention prepared a guide to help national focal points in preparing the second series of national reports (ICCD/CRIC(1)/INF.4). This guide was produced by updating the first version, dating from July 1999 (ICCD/COP(3)/INF.3). It takes into account observations made by country parties in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

5. The first series of national reports from affected African country parties, a synthesis of which (ICCD/COP(3)/5/Add.2) was submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its third session, made it possible to take stock of measures taken in the priority areas and draw relevant conclusions, in particular on the preparation and implementation of national action programmes to combat desertification. They also focused attention on difficulties encountered, especially with regard to articles 6 to 9 of annex I, concerning the implementation of the Convention at the African regional level.

6. The first synthesis of the information provided by the affected African country parties in May 1999 was prepared on the basis of 39 national reports which reached the secretariat before the target date. Three other countries, which had submitted their first reports after that date, presented them to the inter-sessional Ad Hoc Working Group in 2001. Consequently, 42 reports were covered by the first review. The present synthesis and preliminary analysis relates to 47 national reports submitted to the secretariat before 30 April 2002 (see annex I). These are either updated versions of the first series of national reports (40 countries) or new reports (7 countries); only 2 countries did not submit a second edition of their 1999 reports. The second synthesis is based on experience with the first, the report submitted by the Ad Hoc Working Group to the Conference of the Parties at its fifth session (ICCD/COP(4)/AHWG/6) and the guidelines set out in the guide to the preparation of the second series of national reports.

7. The seven key thematic topics for the review are enumerated in paragraph 10 of decision 1/COP.5 of 12 October 2001. They appear in full in the subheadings in chapter II, entitled "Synthesis of information provided in the reports".

I. OVERVIEW OF REPORTS AND OBSERVED TRENDS

8. The process of preparation and implementation of national action programmes to combat desertification is well under way in most of the country parties which have submitted reports. However, the degree of progress made differs greatly from one country to another, though they have clearly moved forward since the submission of the first series of national reports in 1999. Twenty-seven countries out of the 47 have now completed the phase of preparing their national action programmes (NAPs) (see annex II).

9. The NAPs will henceforth constitute instruments of central importance to any desertification control efforts. Examination of past experience in each country helped to identify the baseline situation on which these programmes could be drawn up. The need to incorporate them in development plans or policies is widely acknowledged, but it is not yet a reality in all countries. These programmes are widely perceived as instruments which can contribute to better understanding of the formulation of strategies to combat poverty.

10. The participatory process, whereby a variety of components of civil society are mobilized, has become an irreversible feature in all countries, and the process of implementation of the Convention has made a major contribution in this regard. In most cases, this process is accompanied by efforts to decentralize authority for natural resources management and the related decision-making machinery.

11. All countries have, in keeping with their national circumstances, introduced institutional arrangements and new legislative or administrative provisions so as to create an environment which is more suited to the requirements of Convention implementation. Above and beyond the establishment of national coordinating bodies in all countries, some of the reports mention that environmental legislation has been adapted in order to take into account the Convention implementation process.

12. The evolution of the phenomenon of desertification, in general, and the extent of land degradation, as well as the steps needed to remedy them, were addressed by all the parties to the Convention by means of a global diagnosis of past experience. This experience covered the extent of physical degradation noted (land, water, forests, etc.), the causes, consequences and manifestations of desertification, the political, legislative and institutional machinery, the action taken and the methodological and strategic approaches to intervention.

13. The lack of adequate and predictable funding is universally regarded as a serious handicap which may hamper the launch of the implementation phase of the NAPs, which has taken place in very few countries. Efforts are under way in most countries to set up national funds to combat desertification, for the purpose of funding the priority activities identified in the programmes.

14. Most of the countries are counting on funding, pledged or not, in order to devise or strengthen effective systems for monitoring or assessing the effects of drought and the impact of the activities undertaken. This funding is also expected to permit the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on Science and Technology relating to the development and use of benchmarks and indicators for desertification control efforts.

15. Most of the countries drew attention to the links of varying closeness between their national action programmes and the subregional action programme, and also - in just a few cases - with the regional action programme. These links exist first and foremost in the area of management of transfrontier natural resources, as well as topics such as integrated water resources management, soil conservation, renewable energies and environmental information and education.

II. SYNTHESIS OF INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THE REPORTS

A. Participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations

16. In accordance with the principles set out in the Convention (art. 3 (a)), the design and implementation of national action programmes to combat desertification should be based on broad participation by populations and local communities. Country reports set out the approaches used, the participants involved, the concerted action organized with the various participants concerned and the strategies applied for information and awareness creation.

17. The approaches followed and the results achieved in the area of participation vary from one country to another. Some countries, particularly those in West Africa, drew on experience acquired in the process of decentralization. The administrative arrangements generated by such activities provided a favourable setting for fostering a process of participation. Other countries embarked on an unprecedented experience in their national decision-making process for the first time thanks to this provision of the Convention.

18. A wide range of actors representing various components of civil society have been affected, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the country; these are rural producers, religious and customary chiefs, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and women's and young people's associations. Added to this category of actor are the representatives of the technical departments of the ministries concerned, political forums and development partners. Generally speaking, these actors are represented in the national coordinating body. Most of the reports state that national non-governmental organizations operating in areas connected with desertification control are part of the international network of non-governmental organizations working to combat desertification (RIOD).

19. The reports indicate a variety of forms of cooperative machinery designed to ensure effective participation by all. Depending on the country, such cooperation is carried out at the local level, through national forums, by sector of activity concerned or by category of actors. In the words of some reports, it reflects a bottom-up, diversified approach. More than 75 per cent of the countries indicated that decentralized cooperation has been organized on the basis of equal participation by men and women.

20. It is clear that awareness creation and provision of information are ongoing activities which continue to facilitate participation and commitment by non-governmental participants in the process of preparing and implementing the NAPs and making possible greater understanding

of the provisions and the spirit of the Convention. Hence various strategies for awareness creation and provision of information have been launched by countries since the adoption of the Convention.

21. These strategies have covered, in particular, the organization of national awareness days and the mobilization of communication professionals to ensure broad dissemination of the provisions of the Convention. In this regard, the reports mentioned several types of activity, including the organization of political dialogues, the training of journalists, the production of radio and television programmes and the publication of articles on desertification in the press, the production of audiovisual material (documentaries, plays and special music focused on desertification or drought, advertisements and a variety of novelty items), summaries of the Convention in various national languages, and so on.

22. Some reports state that capacity-building sessions have been organized on community resource management strategies to ensure that local people participate effectively in and assume responsibility for desertification control at the national and local level. Other reports point to the need for greater mobilization of young people to guarantee that achievements are sustained over the long term. One report even underlines the importance of capacity-building to promote land ownership. Study tours to neighbouring countries have been organized for farmers to foster exchanges of traditional knowledge, promote participation by all those involved, draw on information networks and develop the ability of these actors to devise and apply measures that can contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the national action programmes to combat desertification.

23. Within the framework of new measures to facilitate NAP implementation, most of the reports mention major decisions taken to decentralize authority. In some countries, local machinery for desertification control has been established to promote participation. This machinery sometimes serves as the voice of the grass-roots population and plays a major role in all national activities relating to natural resources management and sustainable development. Their membership varies from one country to another, but in most cases includes representatives of decentralized State agencies, non-governmental organizations and local communities.

24. Most of the reports recognize the complexity of the participatory process, but also the interest shown by the various categories of actors in environmental issues. More than half the reports mention that groups of actors who have not hitherto played a major role in the debate on environment and development have been able to express their views and thus highlight their standpoints and their concerns. The diversity of the opinions has helped to enrich the participatory process, and different perceptions concerning the consequences of desertification in everyday life have enabled the content of the NAP to be better targeted.

25. Although some countries consider that not all the potential actors have been mobilized, and that participation by certain strategic groups was limited compared with the role they might play in the implementation of the national action programme to combat desertification, overall it was recognized that the foundations for a sustainable participatory process have been laid through the various bodies planned and the consultation machinery established.

26. Some reports note constraints, including disparities in terms of capacity as regards participation, and inadequate efforts in the provision of information and the creation of awareness in order to encourage people to regard the NAP as a basic tool for strategies relating to action in rural areas.

B. Legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements

27. When preparing and implementing national action programmes, affected country parties have drawn on a variety of institutions, national machinery and legislative and administrative instruments to handle issues of planning, coordination, follow-up and monitoring. While some of these structures were set up for the purpose of implementation of the Convention, several already existed.

28. The establishment of a national coordinating body and the appointment of a national focal point in the NAP preparatory phase was adopted by all countries. However, the title, status, functions, reporting level and degree of decentralization vary from one country to another. Most of the country parties have placed their coordinating body under the aegis of a ministry (environment, agriculture or rural development) or attached it to an ad hoc or existing body (office of the director-general for the environment, national environment agency).

29. A greater degree of decentralization for national coordinating bodies would help to facilitate popular grass-roots mobilization for the preparation or implementation of the NAPs.

30. The national coordinating body is often responsible for preparing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the national action programme. As some reports show, its role is sometimes more explicit: to provide advice, express opinions, review reports, organize missions for planning, monitoring and follow-up of progress in operations, and supervise participation by all the categories of actors involved.

31. The national coordinating body sometimes has a status which enables it to influence political and legislative decisions (reorganization of ministries, establishment of funds for desertification control, creation of new institutions, etc.). In contrast, a very small number of reports indicate clearly that the national coordinating body is a purely technical body which has no competence to address legislative or political issues.

32. The level of available resources and funding for each national coordinating body is rarely quantified. Almost all the reports state that the body has no budget of its own. However, the sources of the funds mobilized for the various activities linked to the process of NAP preparation or implementation (government, bilateral and multilateral partners, etc.) are mentioned in all the reports. But at least 20 of the reports state that the resources are inadequate. Very few reports clearly indicate the level of logistical resources available to the national coordinating body (personnel, means of communication and transport, etc.).

33. All the reports highlight the multidisciplinary and multisectoral nature of the national coordinating body. It is principally composed of representatives of different ministries (environment, agriculture, water, forests, finance, etc.), but also of representatives of technical departments, research institutes, universities, cooperation agencies, civil society, grassroots community organizations and non-governmental organizations.

34. Details are sometimes given of the arrangements for the appointment of the members of the national coordinating body, members being generally nominated by the institution for which they work and appointed either by presidential decree or by ministerial order. The extensive experience and professional skills of the members of the body are unanimously acknowledged: they have considerable experience and are specialists in their fields. Some reports indicate that the national coordinating body reserves the right to call on persons with other skills where necessary, but no mention is made of the use of experts from the roster of independent experts drawn up by the Convention secretariat. The bodies have between 12 and 25 members. In some cases, parity between men and women within the body (often 40 per cent women) is explicitly mentioned.

35. Beyond the national coordinating body, all the reports mention other new institutional, legislative and regulatory arrangements connected to a greater or lesser extent to the process of NAP preparation and implementation. Thus most of the reports note the adoption of legislation governing land problems, in other words laws on agrarian and land reorientation. Some countries have amended their environmental legislation to take account of the requirements arising from the process of preparation and implementation of the national action programmes.

36. Mention is sometimes made of the fact that forestry, mining, town planning, physical planning and water codes have been revised to adapt them to new circumstances. These initiatives have been dictated by the need for harmonization of domestic legislation.

C. Resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusion of partnership agreements

37. In the Convention the importance of partnership and international cooperation in implementing national action programmes to combat desertification is recognized. Many reports demonstrate the usefulness of establishing partnership relations among Governments, development partners, non-governmental organizations, local people, and so on in the formulation, implementation and funding of national and subregional action programmes and the regional action programme.

38. For the countries of the Sahel, efforts to combat desertification began with the great drought of the 1970s, which was classified as a natural disaster. Integration of environmental problems in national development strategies began during that period, and the worst-affected countries drew up national plans to combat desertification, bearing different titles from one country to another. These documents formed a frame of reference for growing awareness of environmental problems, and particularly desertification, but enthusiastic support for their implementation did not result in practical action. The reasons for non-implementation lay mostly in the lack of financial resources, and to a lesser extent in the failure to involve all actors and also centralized management.

39. In countries which have finalized their NAPs, initiatives are being taken to examine the scope for establishing lasting partnerships in order to mobilize adequate financial resources to guarantee implementation of the NAPs. Very few countries mention the organization of consultations with national and international partners in order to mobilize the support needed for the implementation of the action programme. Only 25 per cent of the reports refer to the establishment, at the national level, of an informal process of cooperation with bilateral and multilateral partners to give consistency to their activities in the field of natural resources management and environmental protection, and more especially desertification control.

40. In a quarter of the countries, especially in the Sahel, such cooperation is made easier by the fact that one of the partner countries has agreed to take the lead in coordinating the various related activities. This cooperation machinery has in most cases contributed to the mobilization of the various contributions from the bilateral and multilateral partners towards the NAP preparation process. In contrast, half of the countries, in particular those located in less affected areas, are experiencing great difficulty in mobilizing development partners and stimulating their interest in the process of preparing and implementing the NAPs.

41. The reports reveal that the development partners are kept regularly informed of progress in the implementation of the national action programmes to combat desertification, through informal coordination meetings. In most countries, ad hoc financial support has been given to the process, either in terms of funds to support the operation of the national coordinating body, or in terms of support for the carrying out of specific thematic studies, or for the establishment of information systems, or for the provision of information and the creation of awareness among the actors, or for the organization of national workshops to prepare, validate and programme the NAP. Such financial support ranges between a few thousand dollars and over 500,000 dollars.

42. As far as possible, most of the countries have made fairly major financial efforts to launch the process of preparation of national action programmes, either under their budgets, or using other machinery. More than half the countries went so far as to explore the scope for setting up national funds to combat desertification to channel financial resources rapidly and efficiently to the local level. Others refer to the existence of such funds, which are, however, not operational. The idea of such funds, as often described in the reports, and whatever formula may have been chosen, is generally based on a degree of independence and on the principle of participatory management of the financial resources destined for the NAPs.

43. The originality of this approach lies in the identification of local resources to fund desertification control efforts. The reports generally list the following national sources to supply these funds: the national budget, the private sector, local communities, non-governmental organizations, etc. This demonstrates the commitment of the government authorities concerned. But the fact remains that without a fairly substantial external contribution, domestic efforts will not enable meaningful action to be taken commensurate with the concerns identified. The rapid process of pauperization of African countries is hardly conducive to the mobilization of domestic financial resources on a large scale in the short and medium term.

44. In addition, despite the commitment declared by countries, the different reports reflect the importance attached to bilateral and multilateral cooperation in financing the bulk of desertification control activities. These activities are generally linked to the NAP preparation

phase, that is to say the drafting of documents, the provision of information, the creation of awareness, various workshops, forums for the adoption or validation of the action programmes, as well as projects for the sustainable management of natural resources and environmental protection, in other words the integrated management of water resources, agroforestry, the use of renewable energies, agriculture, reforestation, etc. Most of the countries have benefited from ad hoc support from bilateral and multilateral partners during this preparatory phase. The wish most frequently expressed is that the partnership agreements relating to the national action programmes will help to mobilize the funding required for their implementation.

45. The countries place great hopes in the support from their development partners in the implementation of the NAPs, and emphasize that the implementation of the actions decided on calls for the mobilization of substantial funds. Pending the provision of this funding, many countries have embarked on activities in the areas of natural resource management, capacity-building, formulation and application of a land policy, agroforestry, erosion control, reforestation, soil conservation, research into certain forest species, local development, promotion of renewable energies, natural resources assessment, etc.

D. Linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies

46. In all countries, a wide range of activities are planned under the national action programme as a strategic action framework (creation of awareness among actors, land development, mobilization of water resources, establishment of machinery to open up remote areas, poverty reduction, etc.).

47. The various reports indicate that the countries devoted considerable efforts to sustainable management of the environment and desertification control following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, when actions became more concerted and better targeted, with many factors taken into account. This led to the drawing up, in most countries, of a national document on sustainable development, which serves as a strategic framework. The steps taken to combat desertification after the ratification of the Convention and the launching of the implementation process culminated in the drawing up of specific plans and programmes by all these countries which wished to mark a break with the programmes that had been drawn up previously but had not been implemented.

48. In many States, there are national sectoral policies which embrace other sectors because of the interactions existing between them. For example, the formulation of a new energy policy may be combined with forestry policy, land policy, water resources and environmental protection. In this way, sectoral policies are drawn up for the main economic sectors, notably those which are directly linked with environmental protection and the sustainable management of natural resources. The Convention encourages efforts to achieve synergy among sectoral policies to ensure better application of major decisions in the field and a favourable perception of the efforts made.

49. Several affected country parties have adopted economic and social development programmes, environmental programmes and poverty reduction programmes; some countries indicate that the national action programme is a component of them. However, as NAPs have

not yet been finalized in half of the countries, and their implementation has not yet begun, the terms of this integration remain theoretical. Some countries define the NAP as an instrument for the implementation of the Convention, and others which have not yet drawn up a national Agenda 21 consider that the NAP could take its place.

50. It is clear from most of the reports that the national strategy to combat poverty, whether finalized or being prepared, now constitutes a strategic frame of reference in the field of sustainable management of the environment. In some countries, coordination and harmonization of desertification control activities are carried out hand in hand with the national poverty reduction strategy. This is dictated by the participatory and decentralized approaches that the countries have adopted.

51. Prior to the formulation of the national action programmes, the great majority of the countries had drawn up national plans of action for the environment, but also plans or programmes for agricultural development, development and management of forestry resources, and training and information in environmental matters and in efforts to combat poverty. Many reports indicate that there is a very strong correlation between the implementation of the NAP and these prior plans or programmes.

52. Some countries adopted regional action programmes, subregional action programmes and local action programmes within the framework of their NAPs. In this context, few reports take the trouble to underline the adoption of strategies designed to foster greater consistency and synergy between the different projects in order to avoid overlapping, duplication and coordination problems. A few countries recognize that other programmes are not dynamically linked and taken into account in their NAPs, while others indicate that there is real consistency between their NAPs and their regional, subregional and local action programmes.

53. A few reports state that the role of the NAP is to promote and stimulate the process of formulation of local development programmes. Some reports indicate that the countries concerned have adopted a decentralized structure and have thus made it easier to ensure consistency with programmes of rural development. Others have designated an institution to be responsible for subregional coordination or have entrusted that task to the focal point.

54. While developing national sectoral policies, the countries have also embarked on defining a national policy on decentralization. The decision to decentralize is justified by the adoption of new strategies for natural resources management, after it was observed that the earlier policies were defined and managed in a centralized manner, leading to the failure of a number of programmes. Most of the countries now base their environmental policies on the transfer of skills to local communities and the tackling of problems by local people themselves.

55. The reports submitted do not systematically bring out the synergy between the national action programmes and the other multilateral conventions on the environment or the national development strategies. However, when outlining the national strategies and the policies and programmes, all the countries emphasize the need for consistency between the sectoral policies and the implementation of the conventions. The quest for synergy between international conventions begins with efforts to ensure consistency among sectoral policies.

56. The links and synergies between the Convention and the other instruments are generally underlined in the national reports in the context of the establishment of a national coordinating body responsible for the implementation of the international conventions. Scope for synergy is more generally perceived between the Convention on Desertification and the Convention on Biodiversity because of the common denominator of natural resources. Most of the countries have set up a national framework to coordinate conventions whose task is to consider how best to ensure synergy between these conventions, though they continue to pursue an independent path under the supervision of their focal points.

57. The reports also emphasize that synergy should necessarily exist in the management of conventions through the formulation of requests for funding, since large numbers of requests militate against access to resources and their availability. Each of the three major conventions originating in the Rio de Janeiro Conference has a tendency to establish its own consultative machinery with the development partners, and this leads to a proliferation of funding needs and at the same time to difficulties in access to funding.

58. Most of the reports underline the constraints which to date have hindered sound environmental management and efforts to combat desertification, and which have stood in the way of synergies. These constraints include inadequate institutional machinery, lack of resources on the part of the State, lack of coordination between organizations and policies, centralization of authority and the predominance of the sectoral approach.

E. Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought

59. Almost all the countries have carried out overall diagnostic studies of past experience in the management of natural resources, and in particular efforts to combat desertification. These studies have generally pointed to the manifestations of desertification and the strong pressure placed on natural resources by largely rural populations. They have also made it possible to appreciate the efforts made by countries to improve their environment and the living conditions of population groups affected by desertification.

60. The assessments conducted by the countries have shown that many projects and programmes designed to combat desertification and mitigate the impacts of drought have been carried out in Africa. These activities have focused on the forestry sector, the promotion of renewable and alternative energy sources, the management of water resources, agricultural development, the restoration of soil fertility, reforestation and measures to combat poverty.

61. Regarding the rehabilitation of degraded land or the establishment of early warning systems to mitigate the impacts of drought, the reports mention a number of measures taken by the countries. These include the creation of national, subregional and regional machinery to deal with environmental issues, the devising of methodological and strategic approaches to combat the degradation of natural resources, and the development of instruments for the implementation of desertification control policies. Improvement of the political, legislative and institutional arrangements in the countries has thus contributed to integrated management of natural resources and fostered a participatory and decentralized approach.

62. In some cases, reference to past experience provided a basis for the formulation of national and subregional action programmes and the regional action programme, which are basically founded on specific desertification control activities. In this framework, some countries report technical programmes and integrated projects organized to combat desertification.

63. Most of the reports refer to programmes or projects for the rehabilitation of degraded land, but it is difficult to know whether they fall within the framework of national action programmes to combat desertification or whether they are taken into account when these programmes are drawn up. The stages involved in the adaptation and integration of projects are not always clearly described in all the reports. In addition, a few reports mention that the projects under way in the fields of natural resource management and desertification control have not been recorded exhaustively. However, some countries plan to carry out an overall survey and then to adapt or integrate the projects and programmes under way in the NAP process and orient them in keeping with the objectives of the Convention.

64. It should be noted that, as regards the priority programmes drawn up under the Convention, most of the countries do not clearly specify, or rather do not distinguish between these programmes and the integrated programmes for desertification control. Yet a few countries have drawn up priority action programmes to launch field activities in keeping with the principles of the Convention. Most of the priority projects currently under way which fall within the framework of the NAP relate to various areas such as capacity-strengthening, conservation of natural resources, information, communication, enhancement of knowledge on desertification, and monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of desertification and drought.

65. The commonest areas of cooperation in the rehabilitation of degraded land include the sustainable management of shared water resources, the sustainable management of shared or transboundary plant and animal resources, the sustainable management of energy resources, efforts to combat pests affecting crops and forest species, early warning and mitigation of the effects of drought, scientific and technical cooperation, information, training, communication and the development of intraregional trade in local products.

66. Very few of the reports mention the role and place of the early warning system in strategies for reducing the impact of drought and desertification, in particular in the areas of food security. Just one report mentions the development or strengthening of the national meteorological network as a measure to strengthen the early warning system.

F. Drought and desertification monitoring and assessment

67. The process and dynamics of degradation are experienced at different levels and different rates in different contexts. In the countries of the Sahel, the reports emphasize the decline in rainfall, the resumption of wind activity, water erosion and pressure on natural resources. Phenomena observed on the physical level include a sharp reduction in woody species and continued degradation of plant cover, impoverishment of the soils and a fall in agricultural output, a reduction in water resources, withdrawal of fauna to forested areas and a deterioration in living conditions.

68. As regards activity management indicators and measurements, the information which emerges from the reports is of two types - a total lack of adequate measurement systems and the existence of machinery which is not operational for lack of resources. Some reports also mention the establishment of machinery for follow-up or evaluation to gauge progress made in combating desertification and mitigating the impacts of drought. Above all, it should be emphasized that in addition to the monitoring machinery, most countries are counting on the resources to be made available to them under the NAP in order to set up or upgrade their evaluation systems.

69. The countries expressed interest in measures which would enable them to assess the extent of degradation of natural resources and look forward to improved management. For the worst-affected countries, steps had already been taken along these lines before the adoption of the Convention. The NAPs made it possible to take stock of the situation with the aim of identifying priorities and possible solutions.

70. In addition to diagnostic activities, a number of other measures for the evaluation of natural resource degradation were highlighted, including the national networks of long-term environmental monitoring observatories launched at the initiative of the Sahara and Sahel Observatory, NAP monitoring and evaluation systems and thematic studies. Some countries indicate that their environmental information systems are operational, giving them the ability to gather more information and so ensure better monitoring and evaluation of desertification. Some others mention the existence of databases or the possibility of making use of the geographical information system to generate relevant information. DISMED (the Desertification Information System for the Mediterranean) plays a very important role in supporting regional action programmes in the Mediterranean countries.

71. Several reports indicate that the extent of resource degradation attributable to drought and desertification is visible, without providing more precise information. Some countries consider that benchmarks and evaluation indicators will become more precise and will be consolidated in the operational phase of their national action programmes.

72. Several parties recognize that the Convention has helped to strengthen partnership in efforts to combat desertification and to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of natural resource management. In this context, countries mentioned the establishment of national systems to gather information for reports on the state of the environment to be presented to Parliament. These documents list indicators in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, water resources, biological diversity and climate change. It is also stated that national forest inventories, which are updated every 10 years, allow the state and condition of forestry resources to be monitored.

73. Several reports mention participation by research workers and universities in scientific and technical monitoring during NAP implementation. Such activities could foster the development of scientific tools for enhanced monitoring and evaluation of drought and desertification.

74. It is mentioned that university institutions and research centres are pursuing a variety of topics in connection with desertification control and the monitoring of natural resource dynamics. The findings of the research programmes, in particular those relating to varieties,

should be incorporated in the activities carried out under desertification control projects. One country is taking steps to foster an environment conducive to scientific and technological activities. They are based on incentives for research, the establishment of a national scientific and technical information system, the creation of a national research system and a network for the exchange of information among institutions, as well as public awareness campaigns.

75. The progress made by subregional and regional institutions in developing benchmarks and indicators is mentioned in a number of reports.

76. The machinery and procedures for consultation with scientists include workshops, participation in scientific networks, consultative committees and sectoral steering committees (for forests, and annual meetings on agricultural research and technical services).

G. Access by affected country parties, particularly affected developing country parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how

77. None of the reports explicitly addresses the question of access to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how. However, it was possible to obtain some information on the issue of technologies, particularly in the chapters dealing with the strategies and priorities set forth in the framework of plans or policies for sustainable development and the measures taken or planned in the context of the NAP.

78. Some reports indicate that cooperation in the transfer of technology is confined to the funding of research institutions or research projects on technologies which can help to combat desertification effectively. Most of the countries indicate a need to build capacity to handle technologies which are appropriate to the local context and have a significant impact on desertification.

79. Most of the countries state that they possess scientific and research institutions with skills in handling the various desertification control technologies. Yet research on appropriate technologies is in most cases poorly coordinated. The scant results obtained to date are not at all widely known because of the lack of funds and institutions for their dissemination.

80. In the energy field, the promotion of new and renewable energies and alternatives to the use of woody fuels is regarded as vital to any strategy to combat desertification and achieve sustainable development. Some of the reports cite a few successful cases of the penetration of efficient energy technologies in environmental terms.

81. In agriculture, some countries report the introduction of irrigation systems using low-cost technologies. Irrigation makes use of surface water as well as underground water. Some countries also indicate that they have developed prototype pumping systems for water-lifting in the context of desertification control activities. Other countries report the import of pumping systems for small-scale irrigation, while yet others have developed double-arched dams for such purposes.

82. Most of the reports say little about the role and place of traditional knowledge in NAP formulation or implementation. However, two reports mention initiatives already under way in the promotion, use and upgrading of traditional knowledge in strategies for the implementation of such programmes.

83. None of the reports mentions the involvement of the private sector in projects and programmes which require the redeployment of identified mature technologies. Equally, the reports give no information on information systems in the area of appropriate technologies in the different contexts.

III. LESSONS LEARNED

A. Lessons learned from the process of preparation and implementation of national action programmes

84. It is not easy to draw universally valid conclusions from the process of formulation and implementation of the national action programmes on the basis of the reports submitted by the various country parties. The 47 reports are all different, and each of them relates to a specific situation. Yet beyond the difficulties inherent in this type of exercise, it is possible to identify relevant lessons in the light of common elements.

85. At present, 27 African country parties have finalized their NAPs and should have launched the implementation phase. However, it is not easy to distinguish these two clearly distinct phases in the different reports. Neither is it easy to draw a distinction between projects which have stemmed from the action programme process and those originating in other initiatives.

86. In the institutional area, one of the main steps taken by all African country parties was the establishment of a national coordinating body. In most cases, these coordinating bodies have been placed in national-level offices, falling under a ministry which is most often the one responsible for environmental matters. There is a risk that this scenario, though practicable in theory, may not always facilitate the desired coordination between the various State or other institutions involved in efforts to combat desertification. This difficulty is most often aggravated in many countries by the scarcity of resources, and more particularly the small operational budgets available to the Governments of most African countries. However, a few countries have opted for a more representative institution placed above the various ministerial departments - an inter-ministerial agency, for example, to facilitate the coordination and harmonization of the activities of the national coordinating body. Conferring independence and substantial funds on the national body provides guarantees of success in the formulation and implementation of the national action programmes.

87. Although most of the countries refer to the multidisciplinary nature of the national coordinating bodies and the extensive experience of their members, few of them provide information on their effectiveness or a timetable of work, or the frequency of meetings held, or results achieved. The most important role seems to be played by the national focal points officially designated by the countries, who are often the permanent secretaries of the national coordinating bodies.

88. While the process of preparing and implementing the NAPs is generally fairly well under way in all African country parties which have submitted reports, large-scale efforts remain necessary to consolidate what has been achieved, eliminate or reduce the constraints identified and take up the major challenges posed by the phenomenon of desertification in the region.

89. From an overall viewpoint, the incorporation of desertification control into the strategies and priorities laid down in plans or policies for sustainable development has been slow and meagre, even if it is always mentioned and recognized as one of the major constraints to sustainable development. This situation stems from a number of causes, notably the poor institutional, technical, scientific, human and financial capacities of the African country parties and the fact that the approaches to be developed relate to the long term.

90. The process of preparing and implementing the national action programmes does not enjoy sufficient recognition in the corresponding process for plans, policies or strategies for sustainable development. The NAPs contain insufficient reference to clearly defined sustainable development objectives, although in most countries there exist policies providing economic and social guidance, and documents relating to strategies to combat poverty or strategies for the implementation of other multilateral environmental agreements. It seems that the ministries responsible for the economy and finance and for foreign affairs do not play a central role in the process of preparing and implementing the NAPs, in contrast to the process of guiding development policies.

91. Yet in terms of strengthening synergies, the NAPs are often perceived as components of the programme which stems from economic and social development policy guidance and is placed side by side with the sectoral programmes. However, as national action programmes have not yet been finalized in half of the countries, while implementation has not yet begun in others, the manner of this integration remains a theoretical issue. Some countries define the NAP as a basic tool of Agenda 21 or of the formulation of the strategy for combating poverty. The potential for synergies between the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Desertification is sometimes acknowledged, but it has not been realized.

92. It should be mentioned that, within the framework of the new measures which could facilitate the implementation of the national action programmes, the various reports reflect a distinct tendency to introduce measures aiming at large-scale decentralization of authority for the management of natural resources. Thus in some countries local machinery for desertification control has been established to promote the participatory process. This machinery sometimes serves as the voice of the grass-roots population and participates actively in all national activities relating to the management of natural resources and the achievement of sustainable development.

93. The process of preparing and implementing the national action programmes has stimulated and encouraged efforts to achieve consistency between them and existing subregional action programmes, in which the countries had participated. The linkages are formed by taking into account and incorporating the thematic priorities adopted at the subregional level.

94. The participatory approach is a complex exercise, difficult to carry out. Full and equitable participation by all those involved in the process of preparing and implementing the national action programmes to combat desertification is therefore an ideal which is hard to attain. Nevertheless, one of the major lessons which can be drawn from the NAP formulation process is that most countries have embarked for the first time on an irreversible process of broadening the decision-making process to embrace a very wide and very diversified group of actors. Even if in many countries the NAP formulation process is not sufficiently well advanced, a clear trend towards the mobilization of all concerned may nevertheless be observed. This is a new dynamic of participation in the decision-making process which is taking root in many places, including countries where civil-society organizations are emerging. However, it is clear that the level and degree of participation vary substantially from one category of actor to another. While the contribution of non-governmental organizations to the process may be regarded as effective and important in most countries, that of the various other categories of civil-society organization, in particular associations of young people, women or farmers may in contrast be considered as rather feeble.

95. The process of formulation and the initial implementation of the NAPs made it possible to highlight and specify the nature of the interventions needed in a number of priority areas. These areas including both structural actions (institutional and juridical reforms, capacity-building, information systems, partnership agreements, technology transfer, regional and subregional cooperation, etc.) and concrete actions on the ground through specific projects (rehabilitation of degraded soils, reforestation, regeneration of degraded natural formations, efforts to combat wind erosion, improvement of food security, access to water and energy, etc.). In addition to these actions, certain processes involving the formulation and implementation of action programmes have highlighted the man-made components of desertification. In this context, emphasis was placed on improving the perception of the economic nature of natural resources, improving the living conditions of the people, combating poverty, encouraging local people to assume responsibility in the development process, etc.

96. The NAP formulation and implementation process has afforded an opportunity to take stock, in each country, of capacity available to collect analyse, process and disseminate relevant information and data, as well as to produce impact indicators. Various workshops organized at the national, subregional or regional level made it possible to inventory and analyse the indicators already available, in particular the system for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Convention, the system for information circulation and environmental monitoring on the Internet, the early warning systems and the data banks. All these different initiatives foster greater harmonization of the information systems. One may also note the emergence of national observatories designed to provide an early warning system through which emergency action can be triggered to mitigate the impacts of drought in the short term and enhance the effectiveness of decision-making tools in the medium and long term, in particular through integration of drought and desertification risks into economic policies.

97. Where possible, most of the countries have made greater or smaller financial efforts, either within their own budgets or through other mechanisms, for the formulation and implementation of their national action programmes. Some countries have gone so far as to establish a national fund to combat desertification (several other titles exist) to enable them to ensure speedier and more effective channelling of financial resources at the local level. Some

countries have been able to initiate a constructive dialogue with development partners in the hope of instituting a lasting partnership in order to be able to mobilize the financial resources needed for the implementation of the NAPs. The establishment of consultative machinery to guarantee the continuity and productiveness of these exchanges is a clear necessity.

B. Lessons learned from the system for the presentation of reports

98. The submission of the reports should in principle make it possible to indicate the true scale of desertification in each of the cases examined, and also to assess the outcome of the efforts made to combat desertification and mitigate drought. That would entail a process of data-gathering calling for a much greater volume of resources than are currently available. Insofar as the various reports do not always follow the layout suggested in the methodological guide and the additional explanatory note (ICCD/CRIC(1)/INF.4), it is difficult to draw well-founded conclusions which are applicable to other cases. At the present stage of implementation of the Convention, increased attention should therefore be focused on the system of monitoring and evaluation.

99. Above and beyond questions of form, a major difference may be observed in the substance and the quality of the various reports submitted. The questions suggested in the guide for each of the sections do not appear to have received careful consideration. When genuinely addressed, these questions should in the first place enable the parties themselves to gain an objective picture of progress in the implementation of the Convention or at least the stage linked to the process of formulation and implementation of national action programmes.

100. The reports, which are often descriptive, offer very little by way of analysis which would indicate the true state of affairs regarding the nature of problems, the degree of constraints and the extent of achievements reached in the process of formulation and implementation of the NAPs. Nevertheless, in one way or another most of the reports supply information relating to almost all the main thematic topics listed in paragraph 10 of decision 1/COP.5.

101. Comparison between the reports submitted in 1999 and the recent reports was very difficult in some cases, insofar as the progress made and the constraints encountered were not enumerated chronologically. In addition, some countries did not take into account the changes made in the guide in the light of the suggestions made by the Committee on Science and Technology.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

102. The synthesis of the information supplied by the 47 African country parties in their national reports throws more light on actual progress in the implementation of the Convention in Africa. Beyond the specific situations in each country, it may be noted that African countries have made significant efforts in the process of formulation and implementation of the national action programmes, whose importance for all actions to combat desertification is confirmed.

However, a number of obstacles need to be removed as soon as possible, including difficulties in harmonizing planning tools relating to the management of natural resources, the inadequate level of financial resources (the national budget and support from development partners) and technology transfer, and difficulties in concluding long-term partnership agreements.

103. The lack of adequate and predictable finance is regarded by all the parties as a serious obstacle to proper initiation of the phase of implementation of the national action programmes, through the identification, formulation and implementation of development projects to combat desertification, thus establishing the conditions for sustainable development. This has prompted a search for financing mechanisms, which in most cases have operated irregularly. The setting up, in some countries, of national funds to combat desertification which are intended to provide partial funding for the national action programmes seems to have led to little real progress.

104. Appreciable efforts are being made to ensure the best possible linkages between national action programmes to combat desertification and national action plans for the environment or, in general, policies for natural resource conservation and environmental protection. In addition, in almost all countries these efforts currently extend to the national or sectoral development policies and to the national strategies to combat poverty.

105. Even if the process of formulation or implementation of the NAPs is far from finalized in many countries, a genuine move towards mobilization of civil-society actors was noted in all the reports. However, the level of participation varies considerably depending on the category of civil-society actors. It seems important to intensify and strengthen information and awareness-raising activities so that local people feel truly involved. Efforts should also be made to bring in the private sector to a greater extent, since it could contribute to financing the process of implementation of the Convention.

106. The process of formulation and implementation of the NAPs offers an unprecedented opportunity to realize all the potential synergies. Unfortunately, it must be acknowledged that synergy is more a concept than a practice. National policies continue to be drawn up and applied in a sectoral manner despite clear efforts to pursue them in the context of a global approach. The national coordinating bodies established in all the countries, which should act as a link between institutions and agencies at the national level, do not always possess the resources and the authority needed to ensure such coordination. There is real scope for synergy between the Convention to Combat Desertification and the instruments relating to biological diversity and climate change. But thought must be given to synergetic implementation at the country level above all. It is surprising, for example, that none of the reports refers to the national action programmes for adaptation to climate change currently being initiated.

107. The quest for synergy must be dissociated from all considerations of financial support in order to avoid burdening and complicating the system for financing the various conventions. Synergy must be a component of strategy freely adopted by countries. In addition, the national coordinating bodies must attach all due importance to synergy insofar as it is one of the keys to promoting sustainable development. The process of reflection must be launched and sustained by these bodies.

108. Efforts should be made to integrate the implementation of the multilateral agreements relating to environment and desertification, especially in the African context, with the application of sectoral development policies on the basis of sound administration of the latter; this integration should be emphasized in the drafting of requests for funding.

109. In most countries, the introduction and management of information systems must be encouraged and supported. This principle is essential to enable the local people and the various actors in the field to gain a more thorough understanding of the problems, but also to facilitate the study, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development projects which correlate with desertification control. However, these efforts should be pursued in the direction of greater harmonization of the various initiatives, which would facilitate the design and use of benchmarks and indicators, as the Committee on Science and Technology has recommended.

110. Desertification is known to be a phenomenon whose consequences are more far-reaching in Africa than anywhere else in the world. It constitutes an obstacle to development in African countries and plays a major role in accentuating poverty among the populations affected. In addition, in Africa, the countries must do their utmost to curb it. In this context, it is of fundamental importance that the information in the national reports should be very useful in order to underpin the implementation of meaningful actions. Hence the competent authorities in the African country parties should devote their full attention to the explanatory note and the proposed guide. It would perhaps be advisable initially to test a system for the comprehensive review of the national reports for African country parties willing to participate in such an exercise (along the lines followed for climate change for communications from annex I countries), and to do so well before the deadline for the third series of national reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh session.

111. In order that the majority of local populations should feel concerned and participate fully in meaningful action to combat desertification, it is important to intensify and strengthen activities providing information and creating awareness of efforts to combat this scourge. It is vital that the implementation phase for specific meaningful actions involving these populations in the field should begin.

112. It is of fundamental importance that the various African country parties should clearly perceive what is really covered by the true nature of what the Convention terms a "partnership agreement". Such an agreement certainly cannot be restricted to ad hoc coordination which does not allow meaningful action to be initiated which is commensurate with the challenges being faced. Negotiating such agreements presupposes that African country parties have provided their action programmes with operational content, and that the development partners involved in this effort should be ready to mobilize the financial resources required.

113. It is time for all African country parties to integrate desertification concerns more systematically into their budget lines. That would help to bring home to international opinion the priority place occupied by this issue and the resolve to combat this scourge, which hampers

the development of these countries. It is not enough to draw up a list of priority projects and programmes and wait for external funding to implement them, as is done in most cases. But the NAP will open up the prospect of better-integrated programming, because this issue deserves to be addressed on a par with all the development sectors. The implementation of the programmes in partnership with the developed country parties would make it possible to go beyond the project approach, which does not build development, does not eradicate poverty, and above all does not practically address the issue of desertification. Reforestation or the rehabilitation of degraded land requires not only projects, but also participatory local development. Effectively combating desertification certainly involves the introduction of policies in synergy with the various components of civil society in a context of transparency and above all a freely chosen process encouraged by international solidarity.

Annex I

LIST OF COUNTRY PARTIES WHICH HAVE SUBMITTED REPORTS

1. Algeria
2. Angola
3. Benin
4. Botswana
5. Burkina Faso
6. Burundi*
7. Cape Verde
8. Central African Republic**
9. Chad
10. Comoros**
11. Congo**
12. Côte d'Ivoire
13. Democratic Republic of the Congo*
14. Djibouti
15. Egypt
16. Eritrea
17. Ethiopia
18. Gabon**
19. Gambia
20 Ghana
21. Guinea
22. Guinea-Bissau*
23. Kenya
24. Lesotho
25. Liberia**
26. Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
27. Madagascar
28. Malawi
29. Mali
30. Mauritania
31. Morocco
32. Mozambique
33. Namibia
34. Niger
35. Nigeria
36. Sao Tome and Principe**
37. Senegal
38. Sierra Leone**
39. South Africa
40. Sudan
41. Swaziland
42. Togo
43. Tunisia
44. Uganda
45. United Republic of Tanzania
46. Zambia
47. Zimbabwe

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* Submitted a report to the Ad Hoc Working Group, but not included in the first summary.

** Submitted a report for the first time.

Annex II

LIST OF COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE FINALIZED THEIR NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES

Country	Date of ratification of or accession to the Convention	Date of finalization or adoption of the NAP
Benin	27/08/1996	11/1999
Burkina Faso	26/01/1996	07/1999
Cape Verde	08/05/1995	03/1998
Chad	27/09/1996	04/2000
Djibouti	12/06/1997	06/2001
Eritrea	14/08/1996	09/2001
Ethiopia	27/06/1997	11/1998
Gambia	11/06/1996	09/2000
Ghana	27/12/1996	02/2002
Kenya	24/06/1997	02/2002
Lesotho	12/09/1995	01/1999
Madagascar	25/06/1997	11/2001
Malawi	13/06/1996	03/2001
Mali	31/10/1995	05/1998
Morocco	12/11/1996	06/2001
Namibia	16/05/1997	07/1994
Niger	19/01/1996	09/2000
Nigeria	08/07/1997	08/2000
Senegal	26/07/1995	08/1998
Sudan	24/11/1995	04/2002
Swaziland	07/10/1996	07/2000
Togo	04/10/1995	12/2001
Tunisia	11/10/1995	06/1998
Uganda	25/06/1997	10/1999
United Republic of Tanzania	19/06/1997	08/1999
Zambia	19/09/1996	02/2002
Zimbabwe	23/09/1997	02/1998

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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22, PARAGRAPHS 2 (a) AND 2 (b), AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE CONVENTION

REVIEW OF REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF AFFECTED AFRICAN COUNTRY PARTIES, INCLUDING ON THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS, AND ON EXPERIENCE GAINED AND RESULTS ACHIEVED IN THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES

PROGRESS IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SUBREGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES AND THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME IN AFRICA

Note by the secretariat

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Introduction

1. This report is submitted to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention pursuant to article 22, paragraphs 2 (a) and 2 (b), and article 26 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Following the guidelines given in decision 11/COP.1, paragraph 10 (b), and decision 1/COP.5, the Convention secretariat has produced this document to summarize progress at the subregional and regional levels in Africa. The document is based on information given in national reports; it is structured around the seven key thematic topics defined by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth session in paragraph 10 of decision 1/COP.5, dated 12 October 2001.

2. As regards the progress of the subregional action programmes, an initial summary (ICCD/COP (3) /5/Add.5) was submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its third session on the basis of an initial series of reports produced in May 1999. The information in the current summary comes from the second series of reports submitted in April 2002 by the intergovernmental organizations serving as focal points or liaison centres for subregional activities: the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Economic Union of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The full reports as submitted by these organizations may be consulted on the secretariat website (www.unccd.int).

3. As regards the regional action programme, the report basically describes progress since the submission of the first report in 1999.

I. SUMMARY OF REPORTS ON THE PROCESSES RELATING TO THE SUBREGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES AND THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME

A. Subregional action programmes

4. There follow below summaries of progress in the formulation and implementation of the subregional action programmes in the five subregions (West Africa, Central Africa, northern Africa, East Africa and southern Africa) referred to in article 10 of Annex I to the Convention on regional implementation in Africa.

1. West Africa and Chad

5. CILSS and ECOWAS, as liaison centres for implementation of the subregional action programme in West Africa and Chad, have taken important steps which have enabled them to make significant progress. Mention should be made, in particular, of the establishment of a special unit to monitor and guide programme implementation, and action in support of the two institutions' member countries' efforts to formulate and implement national action programmes. Another important activity has been the taking of steps to facilitate the mobilization of financial resources. Special efforts have been made to establish partnerships in support of subregional programme implementation. A number of interesting steps have been taken to boost the role of

civil society in the implementation of the Convention and spur the activities of the thematic groups. Member countries and CILSS have also striven to provide financial support for activities under the subregional action programme.

2. Central Africa

6. Implementation of the Convention in this subregion is in a somewhat special situation because the various parties involved are not sufficiently attuned to the nature and process of desertification. Desertification is, nonetheless, a reality in Central Africa. The subregion still does not have a subregional action programme, and surveying developments of note in order to make an evaluation is not at all easy. CEMAC, which is coordinating the implementation process in the subregion, has embarked on some initial large-scale activities to capture the attention of subregional political bodies.

3. Northern Africa

7. AMU, which is coordinating the process on behalf of its member countries, has made great efforts to launch projects, canvassing development partners for financial and technical support. Two national action programmes and the subregional programme for the Maghreb were developed and endorsed by gatherings held between 1999 and 2001. The report makes particular mention of a variety of initiatives in the Maghreb including the establishment of a subregional coordinating body, stronger emphasis on a participatory approach, the creation of a subregional information and database system, the execution of transboundary projects, and cooperation with research institutions and CILSS.

4. East Africa

8. IGAD has launched over 27 projects in programmes in the course of implementing the subregional action programme; many of their components are concerned with desertification control and drought alleviation. Many of the activities under the subregional programme are being run in partnership with developed-country parties and international organizations. A number of matters of importance for the implementation of the Convention, including the participatory approach involving civil society in particular, are also being taken into account during the formulation and execution of projects in the main priority areas of the subregional programme.

5. Southern Africa

9. The report from SADC stresses the various actions undertaken since the submission of the first report in 1999: these relate in the main to the mobilization of resources following two workshops staged for the purpose in 2000 and 2001. It gives an account of activities in capacity-building, the development of information systems, and the financing mechanisms that must be set up to facilitate implementation of the subregional programme. Among the lessons learned from subregional programme implementation, it mentions the need for lasting partnership agreements between the various parties involved and for linkages between the various multilateral environment-related agreements.

B. The regional action programme

10. The reports emphasize that, since the activities summarized in the document submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its third session, in 1999 (ACCD/COP (3) /5/Add.5), the main activity carried out under the regional programme has been the launching of three thematic programme networks over the biennium 2000-2001:

(a) Integrated water resource management in the great river, lake and transboundary hydrogeological basins in Africa;

(b) Agroforestry and soil conservation; and

(c) Rational rangeland management and promotion of forage crops.

11. There are plans to launch three further networks over the biennium 2002-2003. These activities have taken place thanks to financial support from a variety of bilateral and multilateral partners. A number of meetings on the regional programme process have been held to integrate the programme formulation process into a number of other ongoing initiatives in the region.

II. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE SUBREGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES

A. West Africa and Chad

1. Areas of cooperation under the programme and measures taken or planned

12. The goal of the West Africa and Chad subregional action programme to combat desertification, adopted in December 1999 at the Summit of Heads of State or Government of the CILSS and ECOWAS member countries, is to boost the efficiency of the national action programmes by developing subregional cooperation in the management of shared or transboundary natural resources within the region in the spirit of the Convention. The subregional programme was designed to provide strategic guidance and consistency in desertification control activities by the governmental and non-governmental entities involved in the 17 countries the programme covers.

13. Eight main areas for intervention have been identified. They are coordinated by subregional intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations serving as line managers:

(a) sustainable management of shared water resources;

(b) sustainable management of shared plant and animal resources;

(c) sustainable development of energy resources;

(d) efforts to combat pests affecting crops and forest species;

(e) early warning of drought and mitigation of its impact;

(f) scientific and technical cooperation;

(g) information, training and communication; and

(h) development of trade in local products within the region.

14. Efforts since the submission of first report in 1999 have concentrated on collaboration among members of the first seven thematic groups listed above. Discussions have covered activities under way in each area, action to be taken by each member and additional activities needing to be identified. Work on quantifying the various activities and estimating their costs is in progress, as is the identification of possible partners. A number of steps relating to the implementation of the subregional programme have been taken by the various subregional entities involved: arranging workshops on topics of importance for the Convention, conducting facilitation surveys, providing organizational support, designing and launching specific projects and programmes, executing training modules, etc.

15. Transboundary desertification control projects undertaken under the heading of CILSS/AMU cooperation, with support from a variety of partners, since the entry into force of the Convention have made up the bulk of efforts to restore degraded land and set up early warning systems. Parallel data collection and analysis and the integration of biophysical, spatial, cartographic, statistical and descriptive data are enabling forecasting and early warning models in the subregion to be updated.

16. At the initiative of CILSS and ECOWAS, an information circulation system has been developed. A West African Internet-based environmental monitoring and follow-up system (SISEI-AO) web site is being set up and will be of interest to all who have anything to do with the environment in West Africa. Although initially intended to spread information about efforts to combat desertification, there are also plans to open up the site to questions relating to other environment-related agreements, such as the conventions on climate change, biodiversity and wetlands.

2. Consultative process in support of the preparation and implementation of the subregional action programme and partnership agreements concluded with the developed countries or other interested entities

17. The West African subregional programme provides a permanent framework for coordination, and a variety of advisory and collaborative bodies have been set up. Since the submission of the subregion's first report, the Summit of Heads of State or Government has met, in December 1999, to adopt the subregional action programme; the subregional coordinating committee met in 1999 and 2000, discussing topics such as synergy between the conventions and resource mobilization. The members of the eight thematic networks have also been in consultation.

18. Under the auspices of CILSS and ECOWAS, the subregion has contacted a variety of development partners with a view to involving them more thoroughly in the implementation of the Convention at the subregional and national levels. Partnerships have been established with bilateral and multilateral partners. Cooperation over research and development, the definition of impact indicators and the execution of transboundary projects has also been arranged with several African subregional organizations.

3. Financial allocations by affected country parties of the subregion in support of the implementation of the Convention and technical and financial assistance received or sought, with an indication of needs and order of priority

19. Few West African subregional institutions set aside any of their own resources over the period 2000-2001 to finance subregional action programme activities. The report mentions that CILSS was supported in its efforts by a variety of bilateral partners.

20. In response to decision 9/COP.3, a subregional workshop on approaches to resource mobilization was held in Senegal in April 2002 with support from the Global Mechanism. One of the decisions reached was to set up a facilitation fund that CILSS would manage for the benefit of the subregion; seed resources made available through the Global Mechanism will help support the implementation of the Convention in the subregion.

21. Various other efforts to facilitate resource mobilization, such as workshops and surveys, have been undertaken in the search for synergy among the environment-related conventions and as part of moves to take national action programmes into account in the strategic setting of poverty reduction activities.

4. Consideration and evaluation of benchmarks and indicators used to measure progress

22. The system for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the West African subregional action programme being a matter whose importance is recognized by all concerned, a series of indicators have been developed for monitoring programme implementation and assessing the impact of the steps taken and actions carried out. Responsibility for applying them lies with the liaison centres (CILSS and ECOWAS) and the thematic line managers. Only the part assigned to the CILSS Regional Centre for Training and Application in Agrometeorology and Operational Hydrology (AGRHYMET) - collection of climatological, hydrological, farming, agrometeorological, phytosanitary, pastoral and demographic data and State capacity-building in areas including the introduction of drought and desertification early warning systems - has actually been carried out, however.

B. Central Africa

1. Areas of cooperation under the programme and measures taken or planned

23. Given the very little progress made in implementing the programme, nationally and subregionally, in the Central African subregion, capacity-building by providing technical and financial support remains the main concern. This is true both of the countries concerned and of the CEMAC secretariat which is responsible for promoting and coordinating implementation of the Convention in the subregion. The lack of a specialized subregional environmental institution capable of channelling national efforts to give effect to the Convention remains a major obstacle.

2. Consultative process in support of the implementation of the subregional action programme and partnership agreements concluded with developed country parties and other interested entities

24. As part of the Convention implementation process in central Africa, informal consultations have been held with political officials, development partners and local inhabitants. CEMAC has developed a framework for cooperation in partnership matters with its six member countries. Other agreements with subregional and international institutions are under negotiation. One of the major problems with the implementation of the Convention is the lack of awareness of how real a threat desertification poses to the subregion. The need for public information and awareness activities is patent.

3. Financial allocations to support Convention implementation by affected country parties of the subregion, and technical and financial assistance received or needed, with an indication of needs and order of priority

25. Neither CEMAC nor its member countries in central Africa have made any budgetary provision for implementing the Convention. Steps are being taken under environmental projects to combat land degradation, but not uniformly and without regard for the relevant provisions of the Convention. The report makes it clear that the subregion is heavily dependent on external support.

4. Consideration and evaluation of benchmarks and indicators used to measure progress

26. Given the current state of progress, no action has been taken at the subregional level to address this point.

C. Northern Africa

1. Areas of cooperation under the programme and measures taken or planned

27. The five member countries of AMU, which provides the institutional framework for regional integration, have begun work on the subregional action programme for the Maghreb, finalizing it in September 1999. They have selected six main areas for cooperation:

(a) circulation and exchange of information and data;

(b) encouragement of a climate favouring a participatory approach;

(c) improved knowledge of natural resources through research, popularization and access to new technology;

(d) desertification monitoring and evaluation;

(e) capacity-building, public education and public awareness activities; and

(f) local, subregional and interregional cooperation by means of pilot projects on the rational use of transboundary natural resources.

28. In carrying out this programme, AMU has laid particular stress on moves to guarantee the involvement of civil society in the subregional programme process. At the institutional level, it has set up a coordinating unit for the programme and is seeking financing to support its operation. A number of schemes and pilot projects to do with the restoration of degraded land, mapping of affected and sensitive areas, early drought warning, natural resource monitoring and the monitoring and evaluation of desertification by setting benchmarks and indicators are in progress.

2. Consultative process in support of the implementation of the subregional action programme and partnership agreements concluded with developed country parties and other interested entities

29. As part of the programme implementation process, a subregional project to promote the use of a participatory approach, seeking inter alia to increase the role played by civil society at all stages of the process and devise arrangements that might induce the principal players to become more involved in decision-making, has been launched.

30. As regards coordination, the mobilization of national and international resources and partnership agreements, AMU has sought cooperation with a variety of subregional, regional and international bodies. It is striving to foster the process of joint action-taking and the pooling of data, experience and results with the West African subregion, and to draw up research and development programmes.

31. To arrive at a common understanding of the implementation of the three conventions that emerged from the Rio Conference, and to boost exchanges of information and experience among the members of the Union, the AMU secretariat has set about organizing a subregional forum on synergies between the sustainable development conventions.

3. Financial allocations to support Convention implementation by affected country parties of the subregion, and technical and financial assistance received or needed, with an indication of needs and order of priority

32. Negotiations with a variety of bilateral and multilateral partners have resulted in agreements on assistance in financing subregional programme projects. An agreement has been signed between the Global Mechanism and the AMU secretariat to support the implementation of the subregional action programme in AMU member countries. Consultations between development partners, as part of the interregional programme for western Asia and northern Africa that was set in train by the Global Mechanism, were held in Syria in March 2002. These will, it is hoped, generate support for the efforts of AMU.

4. Consideration and evaluation of benchmarks and indicators used to measure progress

33. The introduction of a subregional round-the-clock ecosystems monitoring system is helping to improve understanding of desertification. Cooperation with the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) is intended to help countries in the subregion to set up a practical system for monitoring and evaluating the impact of desertification control programmes.

34. Numerous activities designed to give the AMU States the benefits of advanced technology have taken place over the course of the biennium 2001-2002. A number of workshops and seminars have defined practical ways of producing national maps indicating proneness to desertification and drought. A desertification information system in support of regional action programmes in the Mediterranean, DIS-MED, has been launched.

D. East Africa

1. Areas of cooperation under the programme and measures taken or planned

35. The subregional action programme for East Africa coordinated by the IGAD secretariat identifies nine priority areas for cooperation:

(a) development and management of transboundary natural resources;

(b) fostering a climate favourable to Convention implementation, especially at the legislative, institutional, economic and political levels;

(c) data collection, analysis and exchange;

(d) research and development;

(e) education and public awareness;

(f) coordination of programmes to develop alternative energy sources;

(g) cooperation in the management and control of pests, weeds, vectors of human and animal disease and diseases affecting animals and plants;

(h) early warning systems and joint plans for mitigating the effects of drought; and

(i) capacity-building.

36. In the implementation of this programme, activities in each of the nine areas above have taken place or are planned. A number of steps have been taken at the subregional level as regards the management of water and land resources and alternative energy sources, with backing from a variety of bilateral and multilateral partners. A scheme to set up a conflict prevention system in the subregion is currently being designed. The IGAD secretariat has expanded its network to include 72 national institutions. Plans for an integrated information system have been drawn up and a number of information system-related initiatives have been taken. The overall aim of the activities planned is to increase capacity to mobilize financial resources for the various activities undertaken.

37. The report gives no indication of any initiatives to strengthen links and synergy with other environmental and sustainable development conventions or to assist countries in the integration of national action programmes into their national development strategies.

2. Consultative process in support of the implementation of the subregional action programme and partnership agreements concluded with developed country parties and other interested entities

38. In keeping with political decisions taken in the subregion, the private sector and civil society are involved in the accomplishment of IGAD's mission. IGAD has therefore involved non-governmental organizations and grass-roots community organizations fully in the formulation and execution of the subregional action programme. The result has been to highlight the need for a review of the subregional programme structures and consider possible links between national action programmes and the subregional programme that emphasize the role to be played by non-governmental organizations, grass-roots communities and other constituencies in civil society.

39. Consultations with developed countries take place in such settings as IGAD's partners' forum, the committee of ambassadors, including representatives of regional, international and United Nations organizations, the project implementation committee, the subregional facilitation committee, support for the subregional strategy and the regional indicative programme.

3. Financial allocations to support Convention implementation by affected country parties of the subregion, and technical and financial assistance received or needed, with an indication of needs and order of priority

40. The full IGAD membership has embarked upon the establishment of national funds for combating desertification, and has progressed to varying degrees. With backing from the Global Mechanism, a subregional facilitation fund to strengthen existing partnerships between IGAD and forces for development is also being established. The member countries have undertaken, in accordance with a decision taken at the IGAD Summit in Khartoum in November 2000, to provide local contributions.

41. A meeting of experts followed by a ministerial meeting on the establishment of a framework for partnerships and better means of combating land degradation and poverty in the IGAD subregion, and on ways of supporting the implementation of national action programmes and the subregional programme, was held in December 2001.

42. Activities carried out as part of the subregional action programme over the period under consideration are being financed by a variety of bilateral and multilateral partners.

4. Consideration and evaluation of benchmarks and indicators used to measure progress

43. No action has been taken in this area since the submission of the previous report.

E. Southern Africa

1. Areas of cooperation under the programme and measures taken or planned

44. The subregional action programme for southern Africa, coordinated by the SADC Environment and Land Management Sector (SADC ELMS), concentrates on seven main areas of subregional cooperation:

(a) capacity-building;

(b) strengthening of early warning systems;

(c) cooperation for the sustainable development of shared natural resources and ecosystems;

(d) information gathering, processing and exchange;

(e) development of the transfer of appropriate technology at the community level;

(f) development of alternative sources of energy; and

(g) socio-economic issues.

45. Through the SADC ELMS bodies, the countries in the subregion have continued to work to put the subregional action programme into operation in the priority areas identified. Activities are being carried out under the first phase of the programme, "action to combat land degradation and desertification", and four centres of excellence have been selected for grass-roots community capacity-building, training and programme formulation methods. Special attention has been paid to the four priority areas identified by member States, namely rural energy, rangeland management, environmental law and local planning. Matters relating to appropriate technology and traditional knowledge are also included in planning schedules.

46. The subregion has continued to work on the management of transboundary natural resources, carrying out the specific activities identified under the Kalahari-Namib initiative with support from a variety of development partners.

47. SADC ELMS has continued to provide the 14 member countries with support in the design and execution of national action programmes, half of which have been approved or adopted by the respective national parliaments. The countries have been encouraged to internalize and integrate their programmes into a long-term development planning and budgeting exercise.

48. The subregion is also actively engaged in preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg in August/September 2002. Land degradation and desertification have been selected as two of the key issues of interest to the subregion for consideration at the Summit.

2. Consultative process in support of the implementation of the subregional action programme and partnership agreements concluded with developed country parties and other interested entities

49. The workshop on resource mobilization for the implementation of the Convention held in Kenya in October 2000, which was organized in conjunction with the IGAD countries and with backing from the Global Mechanism, provided a setting for concerted efforts to identify existing technical and financial mechanisms. A follow-up meeting on partnerships and capacity-building for Convention implementation in southern Africa was held in May 2001; one of its recommendations was for the establishment of a subregional facilitation fund, and a contact group has been set up for the purpose. The SADC Council of Ministers has approved guidelines for access to the fund, which is expected to be launched at a subregional workshop scheduled for July 2002.

3. Financial allocations to support Convention implementation by affected country parties of the subregion, and technical and financial assistance received or needed, with an indication of needs and order of priority

50. The facilitation fund to be set up in the subregion will be one of the mechanisms used to finance subregional action programme activities to combat land degradation and poverty using

seed resources supplied by the Global Mechanism. Funds have also been secured from two multilateral partners to launch and carry out a transboundary project in the Kalahari-Namib region.

4. Consideration and evaluation of benchmarks and indicators used to measure progress

51. As part of the work of its Multidisciplinary Scientific and Technical Consultative Committee set up in 1998, SADC has continued to seek financing for the implementation of an annual programme.

III. PROGRESS ON THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME

52. This section summarizes progress on the regional action plan for the implementation of the Convention in Africa and evaluates activities carried out since the submission of the first report in 1999.

A. Areas of cooperation under the programme and measures taken or planned

53. In accordance with article 13 of the regional annex for Africa, which provides an overall definition of the priority areas in which the regional action programme offers comparative advantages, the Pan-African Conference held in Burkina Faso in March 1997 identified eight areas in which cooperation should take place at the regional scale:

(a) rational management of the water resources of the major transboundary river, lake and hydrogeological basins;

(b) agroforestry and soil conservation;

(c) rational management of rangelands and promotion of fodder crops;

(d) ecological monitoring, natural resources mapping, remote sensing and early warning systems;

(e) promotion of renewable energy sources and environment-friendly technologies;

(f) sustainable farm production systems; and

(g) promotion of an enabling environment for efforts to combat classification and capacity-building.

54. Activities relating to the regional action programme process have consisted basically in the launching of activities under the six thematic programme networks established at the African ministerial conference held in preparation for the third Conference of the Parties in Kenya, in September and October 1999, which was organized jointly by the Convention secretariat and the United Nations Environment Programme.

55. During the period under consideration, three thematic programme networks have been launched at workshops, where each of the institutional focal points designated in 1999 to coordinate the establishment and activities of the networks was able to bring together the African regional institutions specializing in the appropriate domains, selected national focal points for the Convention, and other partners concerned, to draw up a programme of work indicating priority activities for the short and medium term and the roles of the various entities concerned.

56. The first thematic network, on integrated water resource management in the major transboundary river, lake and hydrogeological basins, was launched in November/December 2000 in Ghana with financial backing from Italy, Norway and Canada. It is coordinated by the SADC water sector coordinating unit. Participants have selected three areas, namely water resources information systems, scientific and technical cooperation, and institutional and legislative aspects. The priority activities selected for the short and medium term are as follows:

(a) support for regional and subregional initiatives promoting pilot projects in the rational use and management of water resources in the major river, lake and hydrogeological basins as part of efforts to apply poverty reduction strategies;

(b) support for regional and subregional initiatives promoting synergies between the key conventions that emerged from the Rio Conference; and

(c) participation in regional and subregional initiatives to mobilize financial resources for the implementation of subregional integrated water resource management programmes and plans of action. There are plans, for example, to provide technical backing for the preparations for the round table of donors supporting the plan of action of the West African conference on integrated water resource management, and for the regional strategy of the SADC plan of action on integrated water resource management.

57. The second thematic network, on agroforestry and soil conservation, was launched in Togo in June 2002 with financial backing from Finland and Germany. It is coordinated by the CILSS Institut du Sahel. The activities selected by participants are as follows:

(a) support for regional and subregional initiatives to promote the domestication, processing and marketing of agroforestry products of social and economic value to the African Parties;

(b) support for regional and subregional initiatives promoting synergies between the conventions relating to the environment and sustainable development;

(c) collection, analysis and dissemination of traditional know-how; and

(d) participation in activities under the African land and water management initiative launched by the Global Environmental Fund with the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme.

58. The third network, on rational rangeland management and the promotion of forage crops, was launched in Lesotho in November 2002, with financial backing from Germany and Finland; it is coordinated by its focal point, the OAU Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources. Participants have selected a number of areas for intervention, including improving living conditions for herdsmen, conflict management, analysis of the interaction between cattle herding and the environment, capacity-building, livestock and animal product marketing, and the promotion of appropriate herding practices.

59. The other three regional action programme thematic programme networks will be launched over the biennium 2002-2003:

(a) the network for environmental monitoring, mapping of natural resources, remote sensing and early warning systems. Discussions were held in Abidjan in January 2002 with the African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing, which serves as the institutional focal point for the network; the launching meeting is scheduled for September 2002;

(b) the network to promote renewable energy sources and environment-friendly technologies, coordinated by the National Agency for Renewable Energy in Tunisia, in close cooperation with Environmental and Development Action in the Third World (ENDA) in Senegal;

(c) the network to promote sustainable farming systems, coordinated by the Consultative Advisory Committee on Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development of the OAU Scientific, Technical and Research Commission (OAU/STRC-SAFGRAD), Burkina Faso.

B. Consultative process in support of the preparation and implementation of the regional action programme and partnership agreements

60. Advisory meetings organized by the Convention secretariat in Bonn in March/April 2000 preceded the launching of the three thematic networks; they brought together the institutional focal points of the networks, the Convention secretariat's Regional Coordination Unit, key network members and consultants, and enabled the tasks involved in launching the three networks to be identified and apportioned.

61. The recommendations of the launching workshops held during the reporting period emphasize the need to consolidate and pool the information available in the three areas and establish cooperative links among network members. The aim of the networks is to harness scientific and technical potential in Africa to help give effect to the Convention. The workshop recommendations also make it clear that the institutional focal points and network members will be putting forward projects for inclusion in the "regional and subregional initiatives in support of Convention implementation" portfolio.

62. Network members have already put forward a number of projects to do with water resources and rational rangeland management. Other subregional and regional members of the operational thematic networks are expected to do likewise in order to identify needs in the region and carry out activities in close collaboration with development partners.

63. To improve communications and exchanges of information among the six institutional focal points of the thematic networks, network members and the Regional Coordination Unit, consultations have been entered into with the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) on the establishment of a system for pooling and circulating information under the regional action programme.

64. In cooperation with the African Development Bank (ADB) and the Convention secretariat, an information and awareness-raising seminar for managerial staff in operational departments was held in Abidjan in April 2001 on progress in the various processes for implementation of the Convention in African countries and the involvement of the African Development Bank in the process. The aim of the meeting was to inform participants of the progress that has been made in Africa and identify ADB involvement in national, subregional and regional programmes.

65. At the national level it has been agreed to work closely with ADB to urge African countries to take account of efforts to combat desertification as they draw up poverty reduction strategies, and to regard such efforts as a priority component of national development plans.

66. At the regional level, arrangements have been made to put the joint ADB/Desertification Convention work programme, drawn up in 2001 to give effect, in particular, to the cooperation agreement between ADB and the Convention, into operation, incorporating proposals for the launching workshops for three thematic networks held during the period under consideration.

67. The Convention secretariat, through its attendance at various regional meetings and its contacts with African regional institutions, is facilitating the process of taking account of and, wherever possible, incorporating the formulation and implementation of the regional action programme by means of the initiatives currently under way in Africa (for example the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), regional preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the programme of action of the Community of Sahel and Saharan States).

C. Financial allocations to support programme implementation by affected country parties of the region, and technical and financial assistance received or needed

68. African country parties have allocated no financial resources for the programme implementation process. Over the period under consideration the process has, however, received financial or technical support from various bilateral partners and ADB. This has enabled the three thematic networks to begin working and allowed the process to be facilitated at the regional level by the Regional Coordination Unit. Talks are in progress between ADB and the

Convention secretariat on the mobilization of future financing, additional financial resources, and the identification of innovative funding approaches appropriate to regional-level desertification control projects.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

69. Subregional intergovernmental organizations, serving as liaison centres to coordinate the formulation and implementation of subregional action programmes, were asked in the explanatory note and help guide (ICCD/CRIC(1)/INF.4) to provide information on the key thematic topics defined in decision 1/COP.5 as appropriate; the information received suggests the following conclusions.

70. Participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental and community organizations are subregional action programme priorities in most subregions. The reports indicate that Convention implementation in the subregions has taken account of all the parties involved and that the subregional programmes have been drawn up in collaboration with member States and with considerable input from sectors of civil society. Strengthening the role of civil society is also, broadly speaking, one of the activities planned for coming years.

71. As part of programme implementation, a variety of coordinating and steering mechanisms have been set up or are planned with a view to monitoring the execution of scheduled activities and ensuring that they are both participatory and effective.

72. The process of mobilizing and coordinating resources, both national and international, was made easier in all subregions over the period under consideration by the Global Mechanism, through workshops bringing together representatives of the countries and other entities involved. Creation of subregional facilitation funds is planned in three subregions. It would appear, however, that for the moment these funds have at their disposal only seed resources which would not yet really allow the planned activities to be carried out. In the future, therefore, long-term partnership agreements will have to be concluded for that purpose.

73. The need to improve links and synergies with other conventions on the environment and sustainable development is mentioned in most of the reports. The priority areas for action identified in four action programmes include topics relating to the three conventions that emerged from the Rio Conference (biodiversity, climate change and action to combat desertification), such as agroforestry and energy. The line managers for the areas concerned will therefore have to follow regional- and international-level activities closely and take part in them.

74. Most of the reports mention steps taken to restore degraded land in the context of pilot transboundary projects that have been initiated or are in progress. Only two emphasize the importance of data collection and exchange, the need for a subregional monitoring network and systems to monitor and evaluate desertification and drought as crucial components of the action programme. One report does mention the lack of priority assigned to the monitoring and evaluation system by national authorities as a major constraint.

75. Regionally, the formulation and implementation of the regional action programme for combating desertification over the reporting period has seen the launching of three thematic networks. The first implementation activities called for in the recommendations adopted at the launching workshops have begun to be put into effect. To function properly, however, the institutional focal points designated in late 1999 to coordinate the networks will need additional technical or financial support. The planned information pooling and circulation system at the Regional Coordination Unit may certainly help to facilitate the work of the thematic networks in Africa. Many specialized African institutions that might potentially play a part in the thematic networks, together with bilateral, regional and multilateral partners, are beginning to show growing interest in this programme, which could play a key role in catalysing positive initiatives to supplement the efforts of States and subregional institutions.